

TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FISCAL REVIEW COMMITTEE



FISCAL MEMORANDUM

HB 1843 - SB 1846

March 7, 2022

SUMMARY OF BILL AS AMENDED (015085): Allows the use of a HIPPA compliant audio-only conversation when other telemedicine services are not available and requires that the patient's financial responsibility for the audio-only encounter be consistent with that of other in-person or video encounters.

FISCAL IMPACT OF BILL AS AMENDED:

NOT SIGNIFICANT

Assumptions for the bill as amended:

- Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 63-1-155(a)(3), provider-based telemedicine means the use of real time audio, video, or other electronic media and telecommunication technology that enables interaction between a healthcare provider and a patient for the purpose of diagnosis, consultation, or treatment of a patient at a distant site where there may be no in-person exchange between a healthcare provider and a patient.
- According to information provided by the Division of TennCare (Division), the Division's managed care organizations (MCOs) have been covering audio-only telemedicine services for all healthcare services when other forms of telemedicine are not available since the start of the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE). The proposed legislation would require the Division to continue to provide this coverage once the PHE ends. Therefore, the proposed legislation would not create a change to the Division and would have no fiscal impact.
- Tennessee state employee health insurance plans already offer covered telemedicine visits. BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee began covering audio-telemedicine in March 2020 and Cigna updated its policy in January 2021, which covers minor medical conditions via video or phone. Therefore, the proposed legislation will create no additional costs to state government.
- There will be no fiscal impact on the operations of the Department of Commerce and Insurance.

IMPACT TO COMMERCE OF BILL AS AMENDED:

NOT SIGNIFICANT

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Assumption for the bill as amended:

- The proposed legislation creates no significant fiscal impact to jobs or commerce in Tennessee.

CERTIFICATION:

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Krista Lee Carsner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Krista Lee Carsner, Executive Director

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